

# Nicaragua alumni

## Alumni Spotlight

## Putting Your Ideas To Work

### Edwin Aguirre, SUSI for Young Leaders 2008

Kukra Hill is a small community (1,652 km<sup>2</sup>) founded in 1989 and located in the north of Bluefields, in the Autonomous Region of the South Atlantic of Nicaragua (R.A.A.S.) and it is 550 km away from the capital of Managua. It has a population of 8,800 inhabitants from different ethnic groups, Garifona, Creole, Miskito, and Mestizo. This is Edwin Aguirre's hometown.

When you meet with him, he is a proper young man, polite and soft spoken. But what is impressive about Edwin is his commitment to his community and his desire to improve the lives of youth.

Edwin is always on the look-

out for ways to give back and help out. He is an adolescent trainer on leadership and youth empowerment in communities of Kukra-Hill with the Meso-American Network of Youth without Borders since 2005 to present. He is involved in community service

***"Edwin hopes to pursue graduate studies and be able to create an NGO that can acquire funds to improve the education of adolescents in his community"***

cleaning the streets, participating in the program "no waste in our town" with the group Youth Establishing New Horizons – Kukra Hill since 2000 to present. He is also doing some extracurricular activities in his university with University Students Association "Calixto" where he was President of the Economic School at BICU, Student Council for defense of Student Rights and a mentor for stu-



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## ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT INNOVATION FUND

STATE ALUMNI  
YOUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The Office of Alumni Affairs is pleased to announce a new funding opportunity, the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF). AEIF offers alumni and posts the opportunity to address global issues on a local, national, regional or international level.

The AEIF competition launches **February 16, 2011**, and has three phases. First round ideas must be submitted by alumni between **February 16 and March 13** on the State Alumni website (<https://alumni.state.gov>). Finalists will be

announced by April 4 and winning projects will be announced on May 23.

Alumni can submit proposals up to \$35,000 USD in the following categories or combinations thereof: democracy and human rights; economic opportunity and prosperity; women's empowerment; promoting a better environment; food security; global health; and outreach to marginalized communities. More information, including eligibility requirements, is available at: <https://alumni.state.gov/aeif>.



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Local youth volunteer planting the trees.

dents in their second year studying mathematics and statistics. Edwin hopes to pursue graduate studies and be able to create an NGO that can acquire funds to improve the education of adolescents in his community.

When Edwin learned about the SUSI for Young Leaders program, he saw an opportunity to exchange ideas and come back to Nicaragua with a project in mind. The project: "The Lemon Is More Than A Fruit Tree"

Edwin remembered that in Kukra Hill there were good quantities of fruit

trees and wood in every place, and you could find one or two trees in the yard of every house. Edwin saw that the lemons and oranges were scarce now. This had contributed to the increase in the cost of living of the community, because the inhabitants use a lot these products (especially lemons) as a part of their culture in their traditional food and beverages and they now had to buy them from outsiders.

"So why not plant new lemon trees?" he thought. Although it might have seemed a lot of work, more than a 3 year project, his passion to work for the benefit of his community and involve youth in the process kept him going to write up the project, find funds, talk to city hall and the community about the benefits of such an adventure.

He applied to the ECA Alumni Project Competition in 2009 and his project was awarded funds to carry out his idea: plant 480 lemon and or-

ange trees with the help of local youth.

He collaborate with local leaders to disseminate the information and train the community to care for these trees in the future.

After 480 trees planted, 600 pounds of fertilizers used, 8 power shovels and 17 pairs of gloves worn out, and 16 tired youth volunteers, the trees were planted.

Edwin is a happy camper. He is thankful that he can help out his community. A great example to all of us.



Edwin Aguirre and local volunteer receiving the trees.

## What's going on... Recent Alumni News

### \* KUDOS NICARAGUAN ALUMNI!

- ⇒ In an effort to keep Alumni engaged, and to promote English language, the U.S. Embassy in Managua contacted several Alumni in the field of English Language Teaching. Seven Alumni actively participated in the four one week intensive English language camps organized by the Embassy: English Creates Opportunities (ECO) for high school students, Fluency, Accuracy and Confidence in English (FACE) for secondary school English teachers, the Access English Microscholarship Program Intensive Camp, and Better English Student Teachers (BEST) camp, for undergraduate students preparing to be future English language teachers.
- ⇒ The ECO camp incorporated the skills of enthusiastic TEA Alumni Romel Garcia, Saul Castillo, Juan Carlos Ortiz, Mayerling Molina and SUSI for Secondary Educators Alumna Joselina Gutierrez. Also, SIT Alumnus Jose Adalí Meza coordinated the Peace Corps volunteers' participation in this camp.
- ⇒ The FACE camp again had the dynamic assistance of SUSI for High School Educators Alumna Joselina Gutierrez and SIT Alumnus Jose Adalí Meza. Also, the camp received the collaboration of Fulbright

Alumni Julio Roa, Socorro Brenes and SUSI for Scholars Alumna Mildred Reyes.

- ⇒ The Access Camp brought together the organizational skills of Juan Rostran and Leda Chavarria, former Fulbrighters and now the Access Coordinator at the binational center and English Language Coordinator at the U.S. Embassy, with those of UGRADER Byron Gutierrez and TEA alumnus Mayerlin Molina, who taught English during the week. The students also received an art class from former Fulbrighter Alberto Torres and a session on "Study in the U.S." from former Fulbrighter Alejandra Aleman.
- ⇒ The BEST camp once more had the interactive collaboration of SIT Alumnus Jose Adalí Meza and Fulbright Alumnus Julio Roa, with SUSI for Secondary Educators Alumni Jorge Salgado and Ricardo Mendieta assisting in the teaching area.



Alumni Jose Adali Meza, Ricardo Mendieta, Jorge Salgado and Julio Roa collaborating with the BEST



# Black History Month! Honors Legacy of Struggle and Triumph

By Louise Fenner



A man and his son see the bus in which Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in 1955, a landmark moment in the civil rights movement.

Each February, Black History Month honors the struggles and triumphs of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles — slavery, prejudice, poverty — as well as their contributions to the nation's cultural and political life.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, African Americans make up about 14 percent of the U.S. population and comprise the second-largest minority group, after Hispanics.

In 2009, the inauguration of Barack Obama, America's first African-American president, lent Black History Month a special significance. Obama took the oath of office January 20, the day after Americans honored the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. with a federal holiday and national day of service.

In his inaugural address, President Obama acknowledged the historical importance of a moment in which “a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.”

## HONORING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BLACK AMERICANS

Black History Month was the inspiration of Carter G. Woodson, a noted scholar and historian, who instituted Negro History Week in 1926. He chose the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and the abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

The celebration was expanded to a month in 1976, the nation's bicentennial. President Gerald R. Ford urged Americans to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Woodson, the son of former slaves in Virginia, realized that the struggles and achievements of Americans of African descent were being ignored or misrepresented. He founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), which supports historical research, publishes a schol-

arly journal and sets the theme for Black History Month each year.

John Fleming, ASALH president from 2007 to 2009 and director emeritus of the Cincinnati Museum Center, said President Obama's heritage — a black father born in Kenya and a white mother born in the United States — “continues to reflect the contributions Africans and Europeans have made to American history from the very beginning.”

Fleming said he believes Black History Month should focus on positive as well as negative aspects of the black experience. “Certainly, struggle has been an ongoing theme in our history from the very beginning. However, we were not slaves prior to being captured in Africa — and while slavery was part of our experience for 250 years, we have a hundred-and-some years in freedom that we also need to deal with.”

“I'm glad to see the National African American Museum being developed on the Mall, which will tell a much broader story,” said Fleming. Although the new museum has not yet been built, it launched a photo exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery late in 2007 that is traveling to museums around the country through 2011. (See “African Americans' Struggles, Triumphs Shown in Photo Exhibition.”)

“I think that African-American history gets more attention during February than during any other time of year,” Fleming said, “and I think it's an opportunity for us in the field to emphasize that it is something that should be studied throughout the year.”

Each year, the U.S. president honors Black History Month, or African-American History Month as it is also called, with a proclamation and a celebration at the White House. States and cities hold their own events around the country, and media feature topics related to black history.

ASALH has its headquarters in Washington, where Woodson lived from 1915 until his death in 1950. His home is designated a national historic site.

More information on ASALF and the National Urban League is available on their websites.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)

## ON-LINE RESOURCES

### \* **America.gov**

⇒ Presidential Proclamation on African American History Month

<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2011/February/20110201172113su9.075403e-03.html>

⇒ The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

[http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/30145/mlk\\_legacy/](http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/30145/mlk_legacy/)

⇒ Census Bureau Fact Sheet on Black History Month

[http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb11ff\\_01.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11ff_01.html)



# Photo Gallery



Rolando Tellez, Fulbright Alumnus, presenting his newest book about the Güegüense.



Donald Muñoz, IVLP, and Paul Gomez, SUSI for Young Leaders, panelists for a Youth Conference.



Youth Ambassadors Alumni during a BBQ hosted by the U.S. Embassy Managua

## Calendar of Activities

### February 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		01	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 STATE ALUMNI Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) to Launch	17	18 SUSI for Young Leaders 2010 Reunion	19
20	21 Embassy closed President's day	22 Black History Month Speaker	23	24	25 CONX Webcast Inspiring Entrepreneurship More on America.gov	26 Youth Ambassador 2011 Reunion
27	28 Education USA Community College Fair					

**We want to hear from you!**

This is **YOUR** newsletter, we welcome suggestions and questions. Write to our office to include your articles, your efforts, your photos...

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